THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI KAMLA SINHA): (a) and (b) Government are aware of press reports about Pakistan's suspected chemical weapons programme. However, the Pakistan Government has in an official statement stated *inter-alia* that "Pakistan has always been an ardent advocate of a complete ban on the development, production, stockpiling and use of chemical weapons". Pakistan is a signatory to the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) but is yet to ratify it. Government is hopeful that Pakistan will ratify the CWC at the earliest. India is an orginal State Party to CWC which entered into force on 29th April, 1997. The convention requires States Parties to provide certain declarations within stipulated time schedules. Accordingly, India submitted these declarations which contain details of India's chemical weapons' stocks and production facilities, as mandated by the Convention.

Burton Amendment Reducing US Aid to India

1727. SHRI SHIV CHARAN SINGH: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the proposed Burton Amendment, advocating reduction in aid to India by the US; and

(b) if so, Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI SALEEM IQBAL SHERWANI): (a) Government are aware that, as in past years, US Congressman Dan Burton has proposed amendments to the Foreign Operations appropriations Bill. The thrust of the amendments is to limit US development assistance to India, on grounds of alleged human rights violations. Last year, a similar Burton Amendment had been resoundingly defeated.

(b) Government have categorically rejected the baseless allegations circulated by Congressman Burton to his Congressional colleagues. Government's strong opposition to such allegations have been made clear to US congressmen and Senators. Government remain alert to developments in this regard.

Meeting of ASEAN Regional forum in Kuala Lumpur

1728. SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Prime Minister attended a meeting of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) held in Kuala Lumpur from July 26—29, 1997, besides the Minister of State for External Affairs who lead the Indian Delegation to the meeting at the Foreign Ministers' level, held on July 27, 1997;

(b) if so, the details of the discussions held in Kuala Lumpur and the outcome thereof; and

(c) whether there was any appreciation of India's foreign policy under the "Gujral doctrine"; if so, what was the impression/significance of PM's visit among the ASEAN?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI SALEEM IQBAL SHERWANI): (a) Prime Minister did not attend the meeting of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) and Post Ministerial Conference (PMC) held in Kuala Lumpur from July 26-27, 1997. However, Finance Minister Shri P Chidambaram led the Indian delegation which included Shri S. Sherwani, Minister of State for External Affairs.

(b) Both the Finance Minister and Minister of State for External Affairs attended the above mentioned meetings as well as held extensive bilateral talks on issues of mutual concern with leaders from countries attending the meetings. These countries include USA, Russia, China, New Zealand, Canada, apart from the the ASEAN member countries.